



Massachusetts  
Department  
of  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
PROTECTION

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## Benefits of an Expanded Bottle Bill on Municipal Refuse and Recycling Costs and Revenues\*

The Bottle Bill, enacted in 1982, requires a nickel deposit on beer and soda containers. Consumers are allowed to return empty containers to their local retailer or redemption center for a five cent refund. Beverage manufacturers are responsible for the collection and recycling of their products. An expanded Bottle Bill would extend a nickel deposit to water, juice, energy drink and sport drink bottles, which now represent over 30% of the beverages sold in Massachusetts and are the fastest growing segment of the beverage industry. The cost to manage these discarded containers is currently the responsibility of municipalities through collection of public waste receptacles and household trash and recycling programs.

MassDEP commissioned an analysis of the impact of an expanded Bottle Bill on municipal refuse and recycling costs and revenues. In calculating the impact, the study examined the following:

### Avoided Collection Costs:

Expanding the Bottle Bill would remove a significant portion of beverage containers typically collected through trash and recycling programs and make the recycling of them the responsibility of manufacturers. The study estimated the annual cost savings through avoided waste and recycling collection costs at roughly \$4 to \$5 million.

### Avoided Disposal Costs:

Since Bottle Bill recycling rates are more than double the rate achieved through traditional municipal recycling programs, significant amounts of beverage containers currently going in municipal trash would be diverted to recycling through the Bottle Bill system. This results in a significant reduction in trash disposal costs. The study estimated avoided disposal costs to be \$482,000 to \$2,334,000 annually.

### Net Recycling Revenues:

An estimated 18,000 tons of beverage containers would be diverted from municipal recycling efforts and recycled through the Bottle Bill system. Communities typically receive some revenue from the sale of these materials. The study estimated these revenues to be nearly \$900,000 annually.

The table below summarizes the study's conclusion that an expansion of the Bottle Bill would save municipalities between \$3.7 and \$6.5 million annually in avoided collection and disposal/recycling costs. "Low" and "High" figures represent two ranges of anticipated redemption under an expanded Bottle Bill.

	Benefits / (Costs)	Low (\$)	High (\$)
1	Avoided Collection Costs	\$4,214,000	\$5,033,000
2	Net Recycling Revenues	(\$899,000)	(\$899,000)
3	Avoided Disposal Costs	\$482,000	\$2,334,000
	Subtotal:	\$3,797,000	\$6,468,000

### Litter Abatement:

Additionally, the study estimated that an expanded Bottle Bill would save Massachusetts municipalities over \$500,000 annually in avoided litter collection costs.

For additional information contact:

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\* The information contained in this fact sheet references DSM Environmental's 2009 study, "Analysis of the Impact of an Expanded Bottle Bill on Municipal Refuse and Recycling Costs and Revenues," available on request.



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May 28, 2009

Address...

Dear <CEO>,

Massachusetts municipalities are paying to manage millions of non-redeemable beverage containers each year as trash or litter. While generally less than disposal, even recycling has a cost associated with it.

Thanks to the Bottle Bill, about 68% of beer and soda containers are redeemed for their deposit, which means municipalities don't have to manage them either as litter, trash or recycling. Since it was enacted in 1981, many new types of beverages have been introduced to the market. More than 400 million containers that are consumed in Massachusetts are not covered by deposits. Less than 1/3 of these are recycled, which means **most of them are littered or disposed, at great cost to municipalities.**

MassRecycle, the state's non-profit recycling coalition, in conjunction with MassDEP, the City of Boston, MassPIRG, Sierra Club and other organizations, have been working together for years to update the old Bottle Bill to include beverages that didn't exist in 1981. **We invite your community to join us in helping to make it happen this year.** New York and Connecticut recently updated their bottle bills to include noncarbonated beverage containers. **It's time that those who profit from selling these products in Massachusetts take responsibility for managing their waste.**

Our organizations are rallying behind H3515, which also has 50 co-sponsors. The bill, "An Act to Improve Recycling Rates in the Commonwealth" is sponsored by Representative Alice Wolf. The Joint Committees on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy will hold **hearings on this bill and related bills in the fall.** MassRecycle is asking the Chief Elected Officials of all municipalities to **support this bill by signing the attached resolution at your next meeting.**

Other pertinent information is attached for your consideration. Your support would be compelling to the legislators, and may make the difference in finally getting this bill out of committee for a vote.

For more information, go to [www.massbottlebill.org](http://www.massbottlebill.org).

Sincerely yours,

Jessica Wozniak  
Executive Director

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## PROCLAMATION

### Resolution in Support of Updating the Massachusetts Bottle Bill

**WHEREAS**, since the 1982 passage of Massachusetts Beverage Container Recovery Law, also known as the "Bottle Bill," Massachusetts cities and towns enjoy less litter and recycle more than 80% of deposit containers (those containing beer/malt beverages, carbonated soft drinks, and mineral water); and

**WHEREAS**, 28 years ago, the Bottle Bill's proponents could not foresee beverage industry changes such as the arrival and remarkable popularity of non-carbonated water, tea, fruit juice, and sports drinks packaged in ready-to-drink containers; and

**WHEREAS**, making new bottles and cans from virgin materials is more energy-intensive and pollution-generating than using recycled material; and

**WHEREAS**, millions of recyclable plastic drink bottles are littered or sent to our state's rapidly disappearing landfills and polluting incinerators annually; and

**WHEREAS**, The Massachusetts Senate and House of Representatives are currently considering H. 3515 and S. 1480, companion bills that would update the Bottle Bill to increase recycling, reduce the volume of solid waste generated in Massachusetts (and related expenses), and create an estimated \$18-20 million in much-needed state revenue; and

**WHEREAS**, state funding for solid waste reduction and recycling initiatives has dwindled in the last decade, further placing the financial burden on local municipalities; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed H. 3515 and S. 1480 re-establish the Clean Environment Fund, which collected unclaimed deposits and directed them to recycling and environmental initiatives in cities and towns until it was dismantled in 2003;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Select Board of the Town of Amherst, Massachusetts goes on record as being in support of updating the Massachusetts Bottle Bill to include non-carbonated beverage containers and urges the Massachusetts Senate and House of Representatives and the Governor of the Commonwealth to guarantee that a significant portion of the resulting revenue generated funds local solid waste reduction initiatives and adopt H. 3515 and S. 1480.

**VOTED AND DATED** this 3rd day of May, 2010



